

Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Program
Stakeholder Group – Oct. 7, 2015
Meeting Summary

Stakeholder Group attendees

- Warren Aakervik, Ballard Oil / Seattle Freight Advisory Board
- Glenn Avery, Queen Anne Community Council
- Kyle Ducey, South Lake Union Community Council
- Tom Graff, Belltown Business Association
- Bree Moore, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
- Marty Oppenheimer, South Park
- Vlad Oustimovitch, West Seattle
- Susan Ranf, Seattle Mariners
- Rex Wardlaw, Magnolia Community Council

Stakeholder Group members not in attendance

- Jeff Aken, Cascade Bicycle Club
- Linda Anderson, Amalgamated Transit Union
- Michael Beranbaum, Joint Council of Teamsters No. 28
- Barb Chamberlain, Bicycle Alliance of Washington
- Howard Cohen, Seattle Hotel Association
- Alan Cornell, Nitze-Stagen
- Matt Curry, South Lake Union Chamber of Commerce
- Michael Davis, Uptown Alliance
- Jan Drago, Alliance for Pioneer Square
- Hamilton Gardiner, West Seattle Chamber of Commerce
- Phil Fujii, Vulcan
- Jason Handaly, Sound Produce
- Ron Hildebrandt, Trident Seafoods at Interbay
- Tim Hillis, Charlie's Produce
- Ron Kieswether, Oak Harbor Freight Lines
- Lee Newgent, Washington Building Trades
- John Odland, MacMillan-Piper
- Vince O'Halloran, Puget Sound Ports Council & Sailors Union of the Pacific
- Tom Phillips, Compass Housing Alliance
- Lisa Quinn, Feet First
- Ed Shilley, Nucor Steel
- Pete Spalding, Delridge
- Don Smith, CenturyLink Field and Event Center
- Herald Ugles, International Longshore and Warehouse Union/Pacific Maritime Association
- Eugene Wasserman, North Seattle Industrial Association
- Elaine Wine, Ballard

Agencies and staff in attendance

- David Sowers, Washington State Department of Transportation
- Brian Nielsen, WSDOT
- Jonathan Layzer, Seattle Department of Transportation
- Jessica Murphy, SDOT
- Mike Johnson, SDOT / Office of the Waterfront
- Eric Tweit, SDOT
- Ross Hathaway, Seattle Public Utilities
- Geri Poor, Port of Seattle

Agenda Item #1: Welcome and general updates

Brian Nielsen started the meeting with introductions around the room and an overview of topics to be covered. There were no action items from the previous meeting to discuss. He noted that the viaduct would be closed in both directions over the Halloween weekend, from 6 a.m. Saturday to 6 p.m. Sunday for the semi-annual inspection. SDOT crews will be doing upgrades to fire suppression systems in the Battery Street Tunnel, among other maintenance work.

Agenda Item #2 – Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Program

Dave Sowers recognized a large milestone from August: traffic shifted from the existing Aurora Avenue North roadway to a new bridge constructed by Atkinson, the contractor. This new bridge will serve as the future off-ramp before drivers enter into the tunnel. He acknowledged other progress in the north end, including the north operations building and the retrieval pit for the tunneling machine.

Brian Nielsen then gave an update on the south portal cut and cover tunnel, which connects the surface mainline roadway to the bored tunnel. He discussed the contracts that will go out to bid once the tunnel is complete, including the pedestrian and bike lanes, off-ramps, connection to Aurora Avenue North and the eventual demolition of the existing viaduct structure. The progress continues on the south operations building, and the east “pant leg” (where the cut and cover tunnel splits) is undergoing significant change.

Brian went on to discuss the progress of the tunneling machine repairs. STP spent 14 hours on Aug. 24 lowering the cutterhead, exterior seals and bearing blocks back into the repair pit. STP is still in the process of reconnecting the machine. Brian played a video released by WSDOT earlier in the day, which features Chris Dixon (STP) explaining the repairs in detail. After the video was over, Brian emphasized the critical and complex nature of the welding currently taking place. STP has started measurements to ensure that everything is lined up.

Brian explained that backfilling will occur after the dewatering wells are shut off, and the machine will be load-tested. As soon as testing is complete, the tunneling machine will drill through the wall of the repair pit to safe haven three – a block of engineered ground that will allow access for low-pressure maintenance interventions. Safe haven three was always a part of the tunneling plan as the tunneling machine’s last stop before drilling under the viaduct. The viaduct will be closed to traffic while the machine drills under it. Based on STP’s current

schedule, that will likely happen over the course of one or two weeks in the first or second quarter of 2016.

In preparation for shutting off the dewatering wells, Brian noted that WSDOT is continuing to monitor Pioneer Square, and is developing plans to coordinate with property owners, businesses and agency partners. WSDOT is prepared in the event that any ground rebound is witnessed.

Warren Aakervik: Will surface streets remain open during the tunneling under the viaduct closure, including to freight?

Answer: Yes, the closure will be similar to other extended closures of the viaduct. SDOT will ensure that other construction projects won't interfere with detour routes, and teams at WSDOT are working with teams at SDOT and the ferry division to prepare for that closure.

Note: WSDOT / SDOT to present to the freight board prior to the closure.

Agenda Item #3 – Western Avenue water main replacement construction update

Ross Hathaway presented a brief update on the plans to replace the water main along Western Avenue with a larger, sturdier one. It is an emergency procedure in advance of tunneling as well as potential seismic instability. This work is currently on schedule, and SPU is planning on completing the work in December 2015. Ross added that SPU is working with SDOT to minimize road closure impact during the holidays.

Susan Ranf: I heard that there is a similar replacement in consideration for the water main along First Avenue South. Is this true? It could seriously impact Safeco's ability to bid on hosting major events in 2017.

Answer: It is too early to say at this time, but SDOT is monitoring water mains throughout the Pioneer Square area. At this time, this focus is on being prepared if a main does break, and SPU has put mechanisms in place to contain a break should it happen.

Tom Graff: Is anything being done in the Post Alley area north of Western, where it floods after it rains?

Answer: Technically, because the work on Western Avenue is emergency work, the program is not authorized to do those sorts of improvements. However, SDOT has talked about improvements there as well as in and around the "Marion lake" on the northwest corner. SDOT formed a utilities office within their street division and are looking at this project to see if they can bring resources to the table for more comprehensive repairs. The goal is to come back and do a complete restoration.

Agenda Item #4 – Mercer Corridor Program

Eric Tweit presented on Mercer Corridor progress, and noted that this would be his final presentation to the AWW Stakeholder Group. The program reached substantial completion in August, excluding the installation of a detention pipe at Roy Street between Fourth and Fifth Avenues, the cleaning of boulders, and the installation of art. Eric noted that all of this remaining work should be complete by late November 2015. He added that the bus stops east of Mercer Street have opened and the westbound connections from I-5 and SR 99 to Queen Anne now possesses more space for pedestrians and bicycles.

Agenda Item #5 – Waterfront Seattle

Mike Johnson provided a brief update on the Waterfront Seattle Program. Because their work is tied to the viaduct demolition, construction is not set to begin until 2019. The design process will be on hold until 2017 to allow the team to take lessons from the seawall project and incorporate these lessons learned. The schedule delay is also allowing the Office of the Waterfront an opportunity to evaluate their processes, and to begin working through their 2,500 public comments. Mike explained that their work on the environmental report should be complete in mid-2016, after which they plan to do programmatic studies to look at the best and most productive strategies for construction.

Agenda Item #6 – Elliott Bay Seawall Project

Jessica Murphy noted that it had been a big week for the seawall. SDOT reclosed three blocks along the waterfront and resumed work between Yesler Way and University Street. She acknowledged that both the budget and the timeline of the project had been in the news recently, and went on to explain that they didn't want to move on to the northern blocks while the southern blocks are still under construction. This mostly means no change for the public into 2017, as the temporary roadway is operating smoothly.

Tom Graff: What's the duration of north construction?

Answer: It will likely be ending in the fall of 2017, with the work zone in summer of 2017.

There's time now to re-evaluate, so everything's on the table. SDOT wants to avoid closing during the summer, but it's hard to say at this point whether or not that will be possible. SDOT wants to make sure that every solution has been examined, so that by fall of 2016, a plan can be set. Further, the Seattle Aquarium has never planned to close, and will remain open. There are no plans for any restrictions to access that will impact the aquarium.

Agenda Item #8 – Stakeholder group feedback

Warren Aakervik: Has a level of service analysis been done for the intersections on West Mercer Street? *Answer: SDOT has only researched travel times through the corridors, not level of service analysis. The system that they use might allow some of that information to be extracted.*

Susan Ranf: Will the connection through to East Marginal Way still be late in the process?

Answer: That connection will most likely happen as the south access project wraps up. This is estimated for 2017 or early 2018.

Vlad Oustimovich: An issue that's not on the table – how people from West Seattle have to move through the city. Because of the problems on SR 99, drivers now take Fourth Avenue to I-5. I've noticed that a lot of people have now figured that out, and it's getting more crowded. I don't know if there's anything you can do about it, but it's a very useful way for people to bypass a lot of the crowds.

Warren Aakervik: The Seattle Fire Department says that even if a vehicle is empty, if it has carried hazardous waste it's still considered hazardous. If a freight driver travelling southbound at the north portal realized that they couldn't access the tunnel because of this, they'd have to cross two lanes to exit SR 99 and into downtown. When that becomes a major problem, can we

open up a lane for busses or freight only? Can we make that exit-only lane open to trucks and busses?

Answer: SDOT and WSDOT will consult with the designers.

Layne Cubell: This is just a note of appreciation for Eric and SDOT for Mercer West. When Seattle Center started the journey three years ago, we didn't think we could make it through, but we're happy to be on the other end. It's been three long and rather painful but successful years.

Tom Graff: I'll echo that – it works really well when it does work. There's an amazing amount of pedestrian traffic underneath the bridge that didn't exist before. One more thing; the viaduct needs some good news and I'm begging that if the tunnel machine gets rolling, we have to celebrate it. This city is desperate for good news. The viaduct also has some remnants that are lovely, especially the highway signs by the park and by the north portal. Those signs should be kept and preserved by the city. I know the waterfront is thinking of preserving them in different ways.

Answer: The Waterfront Seattle Program has incorporated one of the signs into part of their design to pay homage to the historical legacy of SR 99.

Agenda Item #9 – Action items and adjourn

Brian wrapped up the meeting by reminding the stakeholders that the next meeting would be early next year, prior to tunneling under the viaduct. He also asked if stakeholders would prefer to meet during business hours rather than late afternoon, they should contact the AWW communications team.

Action items:

- ☐ Request from Warren Aakervik (Ballard Oil/Seattle Freight Advisory Board): Present to the Seattle Freight Advisory Board before extended viaduct closure.
 - *(WSDOT to coordinate presentation before viaduct closure.)*
- ☐ Request from Warren Aakervik: How will freight exit southbound SR 99 before entering the tunnel?
 - *(The future Harrison Street ramps were designed to accommodate freight movements. WSDOT has been in coordination with SDOT, the Port of Seattle, and freight stakeholders about freight movement, and will continue conversations in more detail once tunneling resumes.)*
- ☐ Request from Warren Aakervik: Has a level of service analysis been done for the intersections on West Mercer Street?
 - *(SDOT to follow-up.)*
- ☐ Request from Tom Graff (Belltown Business Association): Ensure that the viaduct's historic signs will be preserved.
 - *(WSDOT and Waterfront Seattle to look into this.)*

- ☐ Request from WSDOT: Would agency staff and stakeholders prefer that future AWW Stakeholder Meetings be held earlier in the day, during working hours?
 - *(All – please respond to viaduct@wsdot.wa.gov with your preference.)*